

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1-4 and 7-27 have been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Schneider (U.S. Pat. No. 5,234,085) or De Kock (U.S. Pat. No. 6,264,015) or Driessen, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,123,671). Claims 1, 18 and 21 have been amended to have the piston define a plurality of separate fluid passages that allow fluid communication through only the piston. The plurality of flow control devices each operably seal at least one of the fluid passages. Thus, both the bleed plates and the blow-off discs control fluid flow through only the piston.

Claim 9 defines a plurality of first and second fluid passages wherein each of the first fluid passages and each of the second fluid passages have a different cross-sectional area. A first blow-off disc seals the first fluid passages and a second fluid disc seals the second passages. Thus, a plurality of passages, each with a different cross-sectional area are sealed by a single blow-off disc.

Schneider (U.S. Pat. No. 5,234,085) does not disclose both bleed plates and blow-off plates which control fluid flow through only the piston. The blow-off passages 6 extend through only the piston but any bleed flow extends through the neck 25 which is part of the piston rod 22. Regarding Claim 9, all of the passages in Schneider, which are sealed by a single disc, appear to have the same cross-sectional area.

De Kock (U.S. Pat. No. 6,264,015) also discloses blow-off plates which control fluid flow through the piston through valves 8 and 9. The blow-off passages 6 extend through only the piston but any bleed flow extends through bores 29, 20 and 23, which do not extend through the piston 3. Regarding Claim 9, all of the passages in De Kock, which are sealed by a single disc, appear to have the same cross-sectional area.

Driessen (U.S. Pat. No. 5,123,671) also discloses blow-off plates which control fluid flow through the piston through passages 124 and 126. The passages 124 and 126 extend through only the piston, but any bleed flow extends through bores 181, 264, 254, 262 and 279 which do not extend through the piston. Regarding Claim 9, all of the passages in Driessen which are sealed by a single disc appear to have the same cross-sectional area.

Thus, Applicant believes Claims 1, 9, 18 and 21, as amended, patentably distinguish over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 2-8, 10-17, 19, 20 and 22-27, which ultimately depend from one of these independent claims, are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt

and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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